



– For Immediate Release –

Thursday, January 29, 2009

## **IIMPACT detectives investigate four drop houses in one week. Two recent cases involve just one victim and one suspected human smuggler**

On Jan. 23, 2009, Phoenix police were called to a home at 6005 N. 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Upon arriving, officers found a Hispanic male (later identified as Angle Lugo) tied up outside the house at the end of the driveway. The house was empty. IIMPACT detectives believe the home was used as a working drop house. The victim was taken to the hospital for treatment of lacerations and contusions.

The victim later told detectives he and 15 other undocumented aliens had been held at the home by four suspected human smugglers. He stated that he had been pistol whipped, punched and kicked because he was unable to come up with \$1,500 the suspects were demanding. The victim was able to escape from the home after the other victims were loaded into a gray van by their captors and driven away.

On Jan. 28, 2009, Phoenix police were called to a home at 7933 W. Lumbee on a report of suspicious activity at the residence. This was the same residence used as a drop house for a previous IIMPACT investigation on Dec. 4, 2008. IIMPACT responded and found two men in the home, both were illegal immigrants. One immigrant was processed and returned back to Mexico. The other immigrant, Francisco Martinez, was found to have a felony warrant for fleeing from police and was booked into the Madison Street Jail.

IIMPACT (Illegal Immigration Prevention & Apprehension Co-op Team) was formed almost a year ago. It is a multi-agency project managed by GIITEM of the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) that is designed to address rising crime associated with illegal immigration. IIMPACT is comprised of personnel from DPS, Phoenix Police, ICE and the Arizona Fraudulent Identification Task Force (AFIT). As the name implies, local, state and federal police agencies combine forces to impact international human smuggling organizations operating.

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